

Office of
The Board of County Commissioners
Granite County

Exhibit No. 4
Date 4-1-11
Bill No. HB 6 + 7

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March 31, 2011

Chairman Senator Dave Lewis and Members of the Senate Finance and Claims Committee

Dear Senator Lewis and Committee Members:

The Granite County Board of Commissioners supports House Bills 6 and 7.

One of the projects listed shows the DNRC Water Resources Bureau as the applicant; however the financial beneficiaries of this project are Granite county ranchers. Without this partial project funding, more expense will have to be borne by the irrigators to install the screen. A less tangible benefit of the fish screen is recreational, to keep the fish out of the irrigation system and headed down Rock Creek, a famous trout stream, which flows into the Upper Clark Fork River.

The Flint Creek Water Users is the irrigation association that operates and maintains the East Fork of Rock Dam and the irrigation water delivery system consisting of a siphon and canals. The infrastructure is owned by the State of Montana. The dam sits on federal forest land, near the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness.

There are 52 members of the association—ranches along Flint Creek flowing from the mountains toward Philipsburg and then north to near the town of Drummond. The East Fork Water Project has made viable agricultural businesses possible by supplying the critical element of irrigation water since the 1930's.

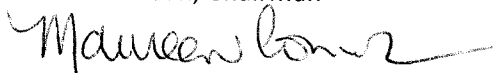
Some partial grant funding toward the fish screen has been obtained, approximately 370K, from the Natural Resource Damage Program. The RRGL grant application of 100K is to be added to this project. The Water Users are appreciative of DRNC taking the lead on the fish screen project, but are aware that funding gaps between grant support and project costs will be borne by the Association's 52 members.

Thank you for your consideration.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF GRANITE COUNTY



Clifford Nelson, Chairman



Maureen Connor, Commissioner